

Rocky Fork State Park Shoreline Management Plan



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Watercraft
2045 Morse Road, Building A
Columbus, Ohio 43229



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Rocky Fork State Park, one of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Parks and Watercraft's 76 state parks, is responsible for the oversight and management of the Rocky Fork Lake impoundment and shoreline. *The Rocky Fork State Park Shoreline Management Plan* ("Plan") is the public document that will guide ODNR management practices and outline park policies that impact the shoreline and overall water quality of Rocky Fork Lake.

The Plan details ODNR's commitment to protecting and restoring valuable aquatic resources for future generations, providing for water-dependent uses, and ensuring access to public shorelines at Rocky Fork State Park. Management of public access, dock policies, lake and dam management practices, shoreline protection and overall lake water quality are included in the Plan. It is the policy and practice of the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft (Division) to make the Plan publicly available to stakeholders. Division statutes and rules govern the implementation of the Plan and are incorporated throughout as an integral part of the Plan.

1.2 Plan Objectives

1. Allow for the construction of boat docks for access to the waters of Rocky Fork State Park in a reasonable and equitable manner.
2. Prohibit the construction of facilities, which by their nature, cannot be accomplished when meeting dock management criteria.
3. Identify those areas where the shoreline will remain in a natural condition.
4. Establish procedures to be followed for identification and removal of unsafe and unsightly structures (e.g., docks, bulkhead, and seawall).
5. Establish procedures to bring permittees into compliance with their permits and to remove non-compliant structures.
6. Establish and map zones on all waters where dock construction will be permitted, restricted, and prohibited.
7. Establish guidelines for the location, size, and type of docks to be permitted.
8. Establish and promote lines of communication to key organizations in the local community (e.g., stakeholders, realtors) to facilitate the implementation of the Plan.
9. Establish procedures to be followed for permit applications, transfers, cancellations, renewals, inspections, and violations.

2. General Information

2.1 History of Rocky Fork State Park

Rocky Fork State Park is an area steeped in the rich American Indian history of Ohio. The land provided abundant game and a ready transportation system in the nearby creeks and rivers. These same streams provided access to the Rocky Fork area for the first settlers. Plentiful water attracted several millwrights to the Highland County region. During the 1800s and early 1900s, at least six different mill sites were established along Rocky Fork's banks. The mills not only ground flour, but also cut timber; carded wool and even wove blankets. In 1897, surveyors for a proposed railroad visited the region that would one day be the park. Local residents had high hopes that the new "Black Diamond" rail line would take their milled goods to new markets and bring prosperity to the area. There was to be a depot built in Rainsboro with a stockyard and telegraph office, and a town was planned near McCoppin's Mill. Unfortunately, the "Black Diamond" never got past the planning stages, and the new town never came to be. At the turn of the century, Colonel Walter H. Hutchins, a regular visitor to the area from Cincinnati, first dreamed of creating a lake near McCoppin's Mill. The Division of Conservation acquired the land in the 1940s and began the dam construction in 1949. Rocky Fork officially became a state park in 1950 and the first water spilled over the dam in April of 1953.

2.2 Description of the Lake and Shoreline

The 2080-acre, 8-mile long Rocky Fork Lake was built in the early 1950s for recreation. The lake is filled by two main tributary streams, the Rocky Fork Creek and Clear Creek, which drain over 70,000 acres of the Scioto River Watershed. Prior to the Rocky Fork stream impoundment, the present lake bottom was mainly agricultural fields interspersed with forest. Many tree stumps were left standing, mainly in the upper section of the lake during construction, but can be found throughout. Since impoundment, much of the lake has become much shallower due to sedimentation.

The entire shoreline of Rocky Fork Lake is publicly owned by the State of Ohio. Steep, rocky shorelines are present in areas along the lower half of the lake, while gently sloped clay banks can be found elsewhere. The north side of the park is heavily developed along the park boundary, while the south side remains primarily in forest or agriculture. Extensive, high-quality wetlands are present on the western end of the lake.

2.3 Neighboring Community

Numerous private residents and businesses are within close proximity to the park boundary and the local community continues to grow due to the popularity of the region. Currently, over 600 state docks exist. Regional growth has resulted in an increased interest in lake access via private dock construction from both new developments and rehabilitated existing properties.

2.4 Recreational Uses

Primary recreational uses of the 2,080-acre lake include powerboating, sailing, kayaking, fishing, waterfowl hunting, swimming, skiing, wakeboarding, and tubing. Surrounding primary land based uses include camping, picnicking, hunting, hiking, biking, disc golfing and bird watching.

2.5 Public Access

Rocky Fork State Park maintains numerous free public accesses including eight public access points, six launch ramps and four marinas. The State of Ohio also owns an approximate 300-foot buffer of natural forested land around the entire perimeter of the lake.

2.5.1 Park Boundaries

The State of Ohio owns Rocky Fork Lake, its shoreline, and a strip of land around the Lake that extends up to hundreds of feet from the shoreline. Park boundaries are currently delineated with a variety of markers including original concrete monuments and subsequent carsonite posts, steel posts, and driven rebar. Not all boundaries are clearly marked and it is the responsibility of the adjacent property owners to ensure they do not inadvertently encroach upon state land when making improvements to their property. Detailed surveys of Rocky Fork State Park can be obtained from the ODNR Office of Real Estate and Land Management.

2.5.2 Boat Launch Ramps

Six boat launch ramps are free within the park for public use. One boat launch ramp in the campground is available exclusively to registered campers and their guests. Courtesy docks are located at boat launch ramps for temporary public use during launching and retrieving.

2.5.3 Beaches

There are two public swimming beaches available within the park: one on the north side and one centrally located on the south side of the lake. Each is monitored for basic water quality parameters from Memorial Day to Labor Day annually. Test results and advisories can be found online at OhioBeachGuard.com.

2.5.4 Public Recreation Areas

Rocky Fork State Park has seven distinct areas with a variety of facilities that are available for public use and enjoyment.

- **Fisherman's Wharf:** Fishing access, boat launch ramp, state docks, and restrooms.
- **South Beach:** Public beach, fishing access, boat launch ramp, shelter house, disc golf, restrooms, and Storybook Trail.
- **Picnic Woods:** Picnic area and fishing access.
- **East Shore Drive:** Fishing, boat launch ramp, picnic area, restrooms, and dam access.
- **East Shore Marina:** Fishing, boat launch ramp, reservable shelter house, state docks, disability accessible fishing pier, and reservable East End Overlook.
- **North Shore Marina:** Public beach, restrooms, boat launch ramp, seasonal retail fuel, seasonal retail store, state docks, and reservable Activity Center.
- **Blinko Bay:** Picnic area and fishing pier.
- **Campground:** Camping, boat launch ramp, fishing access, picnic area, restrooms, camp store, disc golf, and reservable shelter house.

2.5.5 State Docks

There are state docks located at the four marinas within the park and are available through the Annual Dock Lottery process. Slips that are left open between annual lottery drawings will be available on a first come, first served basis.

- **Annual Permit:** To moor a privately owned vessel at a state dock, an application for an annual permit must be submitted, approved, and issued.
- **Dock Season:** The dock season will be from April 1 to October 31, of each paid permit year.
- **Dock Availability:** Contact the Rocky Fork State Park Office at 937-393-4284 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to determine if space is available.
- **Requirements:** All permittees will be required to follow all rules and guidelines for state docks at Rocky Fork State Park.

3. Spillway and Dam

3.1 Description

The Rocky Fork Lake Dam is a Class I, gravity dam and consists of a 154-foot long ogee spillway with non-overflow sections on both sides that tie into the dam abutments. Gate structures are located directly under the spillway for water release downstream. The structure's functioning lake drain is a 7-foot by 5-foot sluiceway located through the ogee spillway. The almost 74-foot tall dam is located between East Shore Drive and Picnic Woods and the spillway can be seen along McCoppin's Mill Road on the east side of the lake.

3.2 Maintenance and Operation

The dam at Rocky Fork State Park has a current Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Operation, Maintenance, and Inspection manual (OMI) that have been approved by the ODNR Division of Water Resources. Copies of the EAP have been provided to appropriate regional first responders including the Highland and Ross County Emergency Management Authorities (EMA); Highland County Police and Fire Departments and several other local entities. In addition to preparation for emergency response, the regional park management team conducts regular inspections of the dam. Maintenance is coordinated through the ODNR Division of Engineering and the ODNR Division of Water Resources as needed.

3.3 Lake Elevation and Drawdown Schedule

The normal spillway elevation is 880-feet above sea level. Currently, Rocky Fork Lake does not have an annual drawdown but can be drawn down on an as needed basis for maintenance.

4. Channel Navigation Management

A central mission of the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft is fostering vessel safety and navigation while providing recreational boating opportunities at our state parks and waterways. The Division deploys various methodology to ensure continued recreational enjoyment of state park lakes that include but are not limited to lake bottom sediment dredging; removal of tree stumps and other large debris; control of non-native or excessive aquatic vegetation; buoy placement; and stabilization of shorelines.

4.1 Dredging

Dredging is the removal of sediments and debris from the bottom of lakes, rivers, harbors, and other water bodies. It is a routine necessity in waterways around the world because sedimentation—the process of sediment washing downstream or from shorelines — may gradually fill in boating channels.

Dredging at Rocky Fork Lake is accomplished by use of a hydraulic suction dredge named Rocky. Rocky removes lake bottom sediment and it is piped to an upland holding pond called a dredge material relocation area (DMRA) where the sediment dewatered and is eventually graded back into the land. Primary areas considered for dredging include high traffic boating areas where sedimentation is consistent and rapid, and sometimes at or near the inflow of tributary streams where silt traps are constructed. Silt traps are long, deep troughs dug into channels that help to collect silt and sediment before it reaches the main lake.

The ODNR Dredge Program is supported by the ODNR Waterway Safety Fund, representing a continuous effort to keep Ohio waterways safe. The Waterway Safety Fund is comprised of boat registration fees, a percentage of state gas tax and federal grant funding from the U.S Coast Guard. No state general revenue funds are used.

4.2 Aquatic Vegetation Control

Aquatic plants form the foundation of healthy and flourishing lake ecosystems - both within lakes and rivers and on the shores around them. They not only protect water quality, but they also produce life-giving oxygen. Aquatic plants are a lake's own filtering system, helping to clarify the water by absorbing nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen that could stimulate harmful algal blooms. Plant beds stabilize soft lake and river bottoms and reduce shoreline erosion by reducing the effect of waves and current. Healthy native aquatic plant communities help prevent the establishment of invasive non-native plants like Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife or phragmites. Aquatic plants also provide important reproductive, food, and cover habitat for fish, invertebrates and wildlife. In order to maintain a healthy lake, maintenance of a healthy native aquatic plant community is imperative.

Aquatic non-native plants are a growing statewide issue in Ohio's waterbodies. Often these plants out-compete native plants, are fast growing and can cause greater negative impacts on lake ecosystems and recreation. Boaters visiting Rocky Fork Lake are encouraged to always clean, drain and dry their boat before launching to avoid accidental transport of non-native plants and animals into the lake.

In most instances, control of native aquatic plants is not needed. However, the ODNR recognizes that excessive aquatic vegetation and/or non-native aquatic vegetation can negatively impact recreational areas that are next to docks or within navigational channels. To protect diverse and stable communities of native aquatic plants, prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plants, and ensure protection of the lake water quality, aquatic plant management must be done thoughtfully and carefully. There are many ways to manage aquatic plants in Ohio, ranging from hand-pulling plants through large-scale harvesting or herbicide treatments. The best management strategy is different for each Ohio lake. It depends on which plant species need to be controlled, how widespread the problem is and how it affects the entire lake ecosystem.

If dock owners have concerns about excessive aquatic plant growth within the lake or near their structure, they should contact the Rocky Fork State Park office. No aquatic plant management or control shall be conducted without the permission of ODNR.

4.3 Buoys

Aids to navigation serve much the same purpose as highway signs. Aids such as buoys, signs, lights and beacons are designed to assist boaters by marking hazards and safe channels, helping determine location, controlling traffic and protecting resources. A variety of colors, shapes, lights, numbers and symbols give each navigation aid distinct characteristics. A boater can learn much about using navigation aids to operate safely. Ohio operating laws require a boater to be familiar with and obey the buoys of the U.S. Aids to Navigation System.

Approximately 100 buoys are placed in Rocky Fork Lake each spring by the Division. Buoy placement is necessary to communicate controlled areas (Ex. no wake, idle speed), facilities information, danger (Ex. dam, shallow areas) and areas where boats are not permitted (Ex. beach, dam). For example, buoys mark the Shore Zone – a no wake zone that runs parallel to the shore line and extends 300 feet into the lake. See Appendix D for the Rocky Fork State Park buoy map.

4.4 Shoreline Stabilization

The inter-relationship between a lake and its shoreline is important. The shoreline zone is the last line of defense against forces that may otherwise destroy a healthy lake. A naturally vegetated shoreline filters runoff generated by surrounding land uses, removing harmful chemicals and nutrients. At the same time, shoreline vegetation protects lake edges from the onslaught of waves and ice generated by our harsh Midwestern climate. The shoreline zone also provides critical habitat for aquatic insects, microorganisms, fish, and other animals, thereby helping to maintain a balance in sensitive aquatic ecosystems.

Unfortunately, as lake landscapes are developed, natural shorelines often are damaged or destroyed. Beneficial natural vegetation is cut, mowed, or replaced. In urban and rural environments alike, this often leads to eroded shorelines, degraded water quality and aquatic habitat and impaired aesthetics.

Years of research describe and validate the effectiveness of shoreline buffers and the economic and social value to people through:

- Trapping and removing sediment from runoff
- Stabilizing streambanks and reducing shore erosion
- Trapping and removing phosphorus, nitrogen and other nutrients that can lead to negative impact to the lake
- Trapping and removing of other contaminants, such as pesticides
- Storing flood waters, thereby decreasing damage to property
- Maintaining habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms by moderating water temperatures and providing woody debris

- Providing habitat for terrestrial animals (i.e., birds, reptiles, mammals, etc.)
- Improving the aesthetics of the lake shore
- Offering recreational and educational opportunities

The Division has and will continue to implement practices park wide that will allow for a natural shoreline buffer. In rare cases where a natural buffer is not sufficient in protecting the shoreline, engineered techniques may be used on a limited basis including bio-stabilization (bank sloping and re-vegetation), placement of natural rip-rap, or the installation of a seawall.

5. Permit Program for Adjacent Property Owners

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1546.32, adjacent property owners, meaning those who share a property boundary with the State of Ohio at Rocky Fork State Park, may apply for the following permits from the Chief of the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft authorizing certain activities on the state park property adjoining their own:

5.1 Private Dock Permit

Any adjacent property owner who acquires an existing dock or wants to construct a new dock on Rocky Fork Lake on or after October 3, 2023, must apply for and obtain a Dock Permit from the Chief. If an adjacent property transfers ownership, the new property owner may submit the fee and application for a Dock Permit approving their acquisition of the existing dock from its prior owner and requiring that dock to be maintained in accordance with the Rocky Fork State Park Private Dock Policy. If an adjacent property owner wants to construct a new dock or replace, modify or substantially repair an existing dock, they must first submit the fee(s) and application for a Dock Permit and obtain a Dock Permit from the Chief. The Chief may deny a Dock Permit that fails to comply with the Rocky Fork State Park Private Dock Policy, falls within protected shoreline areas as described in Section 5.7, or as otherwise necessary to protect and maintain the lands and waters of Rocky Fork State Park as required by ORC 1546.02(B). A copy of that Dock Policy is in Appendix H.

Such Dock Permit applications also allow the applicant to request additional permission to do the following in relation to their dock on state park property:

5.1.1 Multiple Slips

Adjoining property owners may submit a joint Dock Permit application to construct one dock with multiple watercraft slips that serves all such property owners. After the Dock Permit has been issued and the dock constructed, each property owner shall individually pay the annual dock and slip fees applicable to each property owner as set forth in 5.5 of this section.

5.1.2 Dock Cover

A Dock Permit application may request permission to install a cover for the dock. A dock cover shall consist of a metal roof that is painted green or white, and shall be maintained in good repair by the permittee. The installation and maintenance of a dock cover is the sole responsibility of the permittee.

5.1.3 Electricity

A Dock Permit application may request permission to install electricity on the dock. Any such request shall include an aerial map from the county auditor's web site that shows the proposed path of the electric line to be installed. The proposed path of the electric line shall be subject to review, modification, and approval by the Chief.

If the request to install electricity is approved, the Dock Permit issued shall require the following:

1. The electric service shall be installed by the licensed contractor.
2. The electrical service to the dock is placed in conduit.
3. A disconnect box is installed at the dock.
4. A disconnect box is installed at the property meter at the origin of service.
5. Upon installation of the electric service, the permittee shall restore the state park property to its original condition prior to such installation, ensuring that the trench is filled and level to the surrounding area and that the disturbed area is seeded and covered with a material to reduce possible erosion.

Only one electric service shall be permitted to be installed per dock. The installation and maintenance of the electricity is the sole responsibility and liability of the permittee.

5.1.4 Access Path

A Dock Permit application may request permission to form a single path of no more than eight (8) feet in width for pedestrian or motorized vehicle access to their dock. Any such request shall include an aerial map from the county auditor's web site that depicts where the access path is proposed to be located, the natural materials proposed to form the path, and a photo of any motor vehicle that is proposed to use the path. Permissible natural materials that are not permanent in nature include mulch and gravel. The proposed location, width, materials, and any vehicle for the access path shall be subject to review, modification, and approval by the Chief.

If the request to form an access path is approved, the Dock Permit issued shall require the following:

1. The access path shall be formed and maintained only in the location, width, and with the natural materials approved by the Dock Permit.
2. Any motorized vehicle authorized by the Permit to use the access path shall weigh not more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) pounds and shall have a power source of not more than 899cc.
3. Any motorized vehicle authorized by the Permit to use the access path shall display the annual sticker for that vehicle issued by the Chief.

5.2 Mowing Permit

Any adjacent property owner who seeks to mow any portion of the state park property adjoining their own may apply to the Chief for an annual Mowing Permit. Any such application shall include an aerial map from the county auditor's web site that depicts the area the property owner seeks to mow. The proposed area to be mowed shall be subject to review, modification, and approval by the Chief. The Chief may deny a Mowing Permit for areas that currently show signs of substantial soil erosion that impacts Rocky Fork Lake, fall within protected shoreline areas as described in Section 5.7, or as otherwise necessary to protect and maintain the lands and waters of Rocky Fork State Park as required by ORC 1546.02(B). Each mowing permit is valid for one year. A mowing permit does not grant any authority to remove trees on the state park property.

5.3 Hazardous Tree Removal Permit

Any adjacent property owner who seeks to remove trees on the state park property adjoining their own that have fallen and that are deemed hazardous, or that are dead and pose a hazard to other trees, may apply to the Chief for a Hazardous Tree Removal Permit. The trees proposed to be removed shall be subject to review, modification, and approval by the Chief. The Division shall inspect and mark any tree that is authorized to be removed prior to the issuance of the Hazardous Tree Removal Permit, and the permittee shall remove only those trees so marked by the Division. The permittee shall pay all costs associated with the permitted removal of such trees. Tree removal may also be subject to regulation by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the ODNR Division of Wildlife from April 1 – September 30 to protect bat species.

5.4 Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit

Any adjacent property owner who seeks to assist the Division in the control of undergrowth or to remove invasive plant species on the state park property adjoining their own may apply to the Chief for an Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit. The undergrowth proposed to be controlled or invasive plants proposed to be removed shall be subject to review, modification, and approval by the Chief. The Division shall inspect to determine if and how undergrowth and invasive plants may be authorized to be controlled/removed and disposed of under the

Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit. The Chief may deny an Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit if the State does not need assistance to control the undergrowth, the plant species are not invasive species, the area falls within protected shoreline areas as described in Section 5.7, or as otherwise necessary to protect and maintain the lands and waters of Rocky Fork State Park as required by ORC 1546.02(B). The permittee shall pay all costs associated with the permitted control/removal and disposal of undergrowth or invasive plants.

Invasive species around Rocky Fork Lake include Amur; Tatarian bush; Japanese and Morrow bush honeysuckle; autumn and Russian-olive; European and common buckthorn; common reed grass (phragmites); garlic mustard; Japanese knotweed; multiflora rose; purple loosestrife; reed canary grass; and cut-leaved teasel.

After a permittee completes the work authorized by their Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit, they may re-plant native plant species approved by the Undergrowth & Invasive Species Permit, or apply for a Mowing Permit under section 5.2 to maintain the area and prevent the undergrowth or the invasive plant from growing back.

5.5 Permit Fees

ORC 1546.32 requires the following permit fees at Rocky Fork State Park:

Dock Permit application fee	\$100
Request to install electricity on the dock fee	\$100
Annual Dock Permit fee - one dock slip included	\$120
Annual charge for each additional dock slip	\$95
Annual charge for dock cover	\$25
Annual charge for electricity on the dock	\$25
Annual charge for access path sticker for each motorized vehicle	\$25
Annual Mowing Permit fee	\$25
Hazardous Tree Removal Permit - no fee	\$0
Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit - no fee	\$0

5.6 Permit Violations

ORC 1546.32(H) provides that no adjacent property owner may purposely alter, modify, or destroy state park property adjoining their own at Rocky Fork State Park, except in accordance with any permits issued as described above in this section.

5.6.1 Permit Compliance Inspections and Notices of Violation

1. When the Division conducts an inspection and determines that an adjacent property owner has purposely altered, modified or destroyed state park property at Rocky Fork State Park without a permit or in violation of a permit, the Division shall make immediate efforts to verbally notify the property owner or permittee.
2. If compliance is not achieved within 30 days, a written Notice of Violation (NOV) from the Chief shall be sent to the property owner or permittee.
3. If compliance is not achieved within the deadlines provided in the NOV, the dock removal process outlined in OAC 1501:46-12-13 may begin and/or the specific remedies provided in ORC 1546.32 may be pursued.

5.6.2 Remedies for Permit Violations (ORC 1546.32)

- **ORC 1546.32(H)(2) – Any Unauthorized Alteration, Modification, or Destruction.**
The Chief may fine any adjacent property owner who has purposely altered, modified or destroyed state park property at Rocky Fork State Park without a permit or in violation of a permit in an amount equal to the amount of damage caused or all costs incurred in remediating the alteration, modification, or destruction in addition to a penal sum of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00). In addition, any permit currently held or any applied for by the property owner shall be revoked or denied for a period of two (2) years for the first offense, three (3) years for the second offense, and five (5) years for the third and any subsequent offense.
- **ORC 1546.32(C)(6) – Unauthorized Motorized Vehicle.**
If a permittee uses a motorized vehicle that is not approved by the Chief, the Chief shall revoke any access path stickers issued to the permittee and may fine the permittee up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- **ORC 1546.32(F)(2) – Unauthorized Live Tree Removal.**
An Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit shall not allow for the removal of any live tree. If a permittee removes a live tree, all of the following apply:
 1. The Chief shall revoke any Undergrowth & Invasive Species Removal Permit issued to the permittee.
 2. The Chief shall fine the permittee up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per tree.
 3. The permittee is also liable to the state for the full value of the removed tree and for any other damages that are available under law.

5.7 Protected Shoreline Areas

Many areas of the park are not conducive to privately owned and permitted docks, or to the mowing, control, or removal of plant species. The following are protected shoreline areas where dock construction is not permitted:

- State owned property with high-trafficked public access and significant user potential.
- Areas where docks can create hazards to navigation (normal boat traffic) or impede water flow and subsequently interfere with lake maintenance or other park operations.
- State owned property with significant ecological and/or cultural importance.
- Specific areas of ecological protection and maintenance access that are not open to Dock Permits, Mowing Permits, or Underbrush & Invasive Species Permits include: between Docks 10-35; between Dock 3200 and the Rocky Fork State Park Campground; between Docks 1350-2850 near the Rocky Fork Lake Dam.
- A map of the protected shoreline areas can be found in Appendix E. This map may be revised if deemed necessary by the Chief.

6. General Prohibitions

The following are prohibited or restricted activities in Rocky Fork State Park under the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) or ORC.

6.1 Rocky Fork Lake – Watercraft and Docks

- **OAC 1501:46-12-18 Transporting gas on docks prohibited.**
No person shall carry or transport gasoline or gas mixtures on or across state docks except on those docks or in those areas designated for such purposes by the area manager.
- **OAC 1501:46-12-10 Boat docking restrictions.**
No person shall anchor, moor, or tie-up any vessel to any dock facility, or structure on the waters of the Division in such a way that said vessel threatens to or does block, impede, or restrict other vessels in their normal and reasonable use of the waters of the Division.
- **OAC 1501:46-12-03 Subleasing, transfer, assignment, or unauthorized use of dock prohibited.**
It shall be unlawful to sublease, transfer or assign a dock permit or rights thereunder to any person, other than the person to which the permit was issued. No licensed dock holder may permit any other person or recreational vessel not owned or leased by the licensed dock holder to occupy or use the assigned dock, tie-up, or storage space

designated in the dock permit, except by written permission of the Chief or the Chief's authorized agent. In addition to any penalty which may attach to a violation of this rule, such violation shall be cause for revocation of the offender's dock permit and all rights and privileges attached thereto.

▪ **OAC 1501:46-12-02 Four-hour docking; dock permit.**

No person shall anchor, moor, store, beach, tie-up, or leave unattended by any person upon any land or water area administered by the Division for a period of time in excess of four hours within a twenty-four-hour period, any watercraft, except that the time restriction does not apply when emergency or storm conditions exist to constitute a hazard to the safety of the person or property involved, or by permission of the Chief or the Chief's authorized agent.

Watercraft owners who do not possess a valid dock permit or rental may not moor their vessel and must trailer their vessel to and from public boat ramps. In no case will watercraft be permitted to be left unattended or temporarily moored, anchored, or tied to the trees overnight along the Rocky Fork Lake shoreline. Guests of a dock permittee may use their dock for up to 72 hours if the permit is followed.

▪ **OAC 1501:47-3-21 Sleeping on watercraft.**

No watercraft is permitted to drift, be anchored, docked, moored, tied up, or beached by the operator, owner, or other occupants on waters of the Division for the purpose of sleeping thereon at night except at locations that have been designated for such purpose by the Chief.

Areas where sleeping on a watercraft is prohibited on Rocky Fork Lake:

It shall be prohibited to drift, anchor, dock, moor, tie up, secure, or beach watercraft on the waters of the Division and sleep thereon at night in the following areas:

- In any speed or ski zones.
- In any areas designated as a beach or swim zone other than a boat swim area.
- In or near a gas dock, courtesy, or public use dock, launch ramp or harbor or marina entrance, excluding any rented mooring structure.
- Under a bridge or within 300 feet of a bridge underpass.
- Or in any other area that impedes navigation.
- Sleeping upon watercraft is permitted at all other locations.

▪ **ORC 1547.08 Buoys or Waterway Markers.**

Privately owned buoys or waterway markers are prohibited unless permitted by the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft as provided in ORC 1547.08.

6.2 Rocky Fork State Park – State Land

To properly preserve, manage, and protect Rocky Fork State Park for present, as well as future users, all activities must be adequately controlled or, in some cases, prohibited. Examples of prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Burning:** Burning of any materials by private individuals is prohibited on any state property managed by ODNR.
2. **Sewage or Outflow Structures:** Any type of sewage or outflow onto state property is prohibited. This includes septic and grey water drainage.
3. **Encroachments:** The construction of any building, structure, concrete, blacktop, or any other permanent improvement upon state property is strictly prohibited.
4. **Storage:** The storage of any equipment, supplies, or materials on state property is strictly prohibited.
5. **Land Modifications:** Digging, trenching, moving or in any way disturbing the natural land, or adding outside agents or materials such rocks, rip rap, or gravel is prohibited unless performed under a valid permit. Altering state property by adding landscaping is strictly prohibited.
6. **Vehicles:** All vehicles are prohibited on state property except golf cart vehicles which may be used for the following uses: installation/removal of docks and/or transportation of disabled persons. This prohibition does not apply to state park roadways, parking lots, and authorized motorized vehicles on permitted access paths.

Appendix A: State Park Map

Rocky Fork State Park

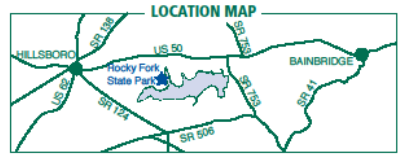
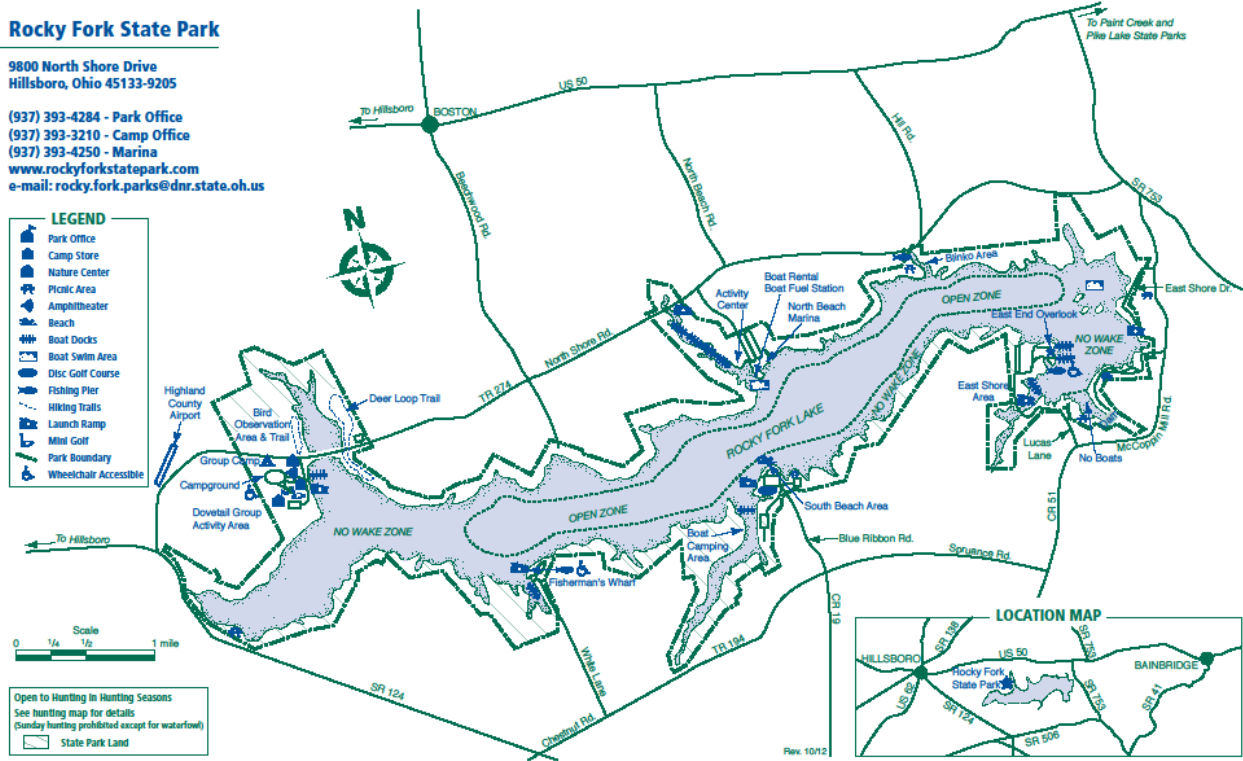
9800 North Shore Drive
Hillsboro, Ohio 45133-9205

(937) 393-4284 - Park Office
(937) 393-3210 - Camp Office
(937) 393-4250 - Marina
www.rockyforkstatepark.com
e-mail: rocky.fork.parks@dnr.state.oh.us

- LEGEND**
- Park Office
 - Camp Store
 - Nature Center
 - Picnic Area
 - Amphitheater
 - Beach
 - Boat Docks
 - Boat Swim Area
 - Disc Golf Course
 - Fishing Pier
 - Hiking Trails
 - Launch Ramp
 - Mini Golf
 - Park Boundary
 - Wheelchair Accessible

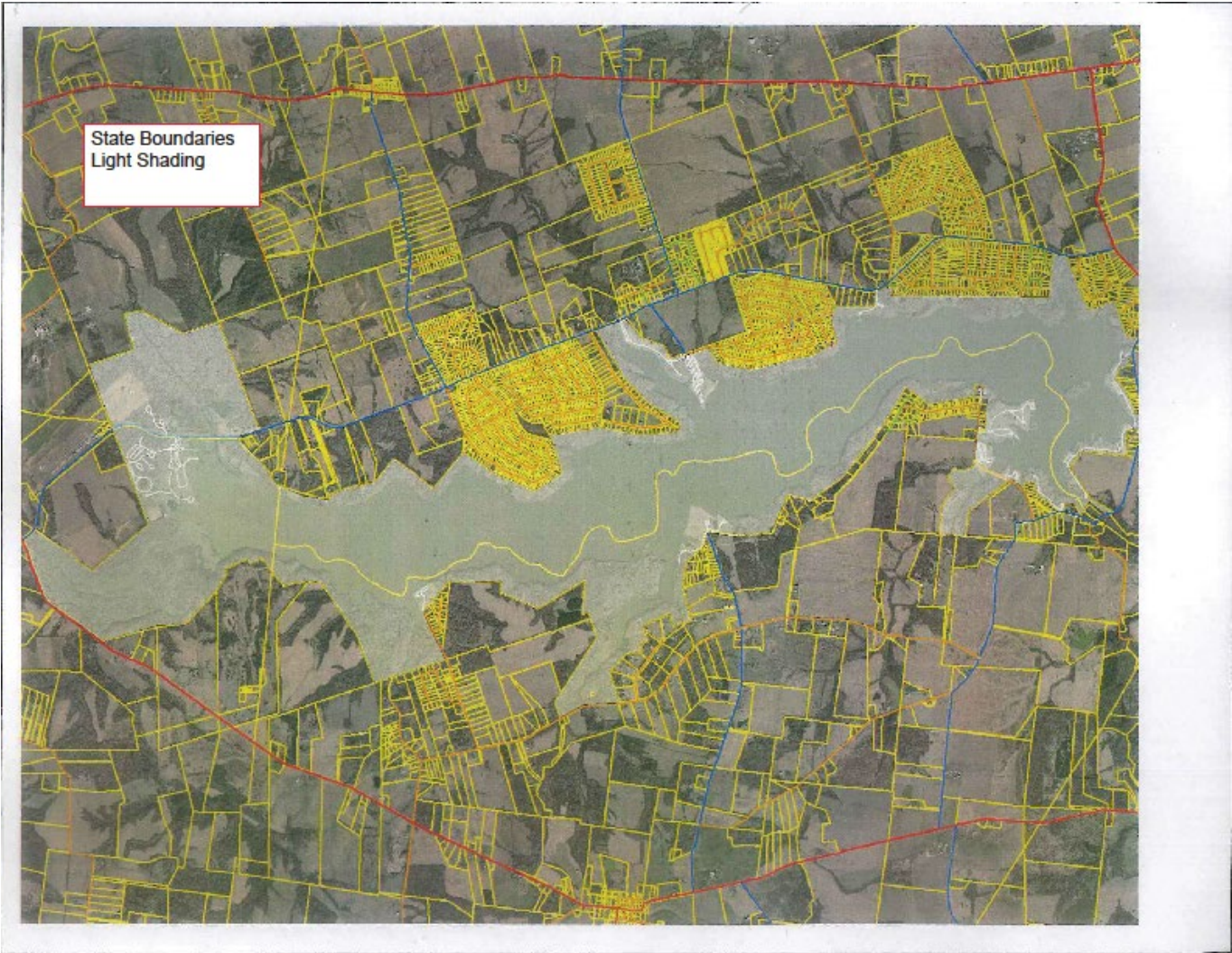


Open to Hunting in Hunting Seasons
See hunting map for details
(Sunday hunting prohibited except for waterfowl)
 State Park Land



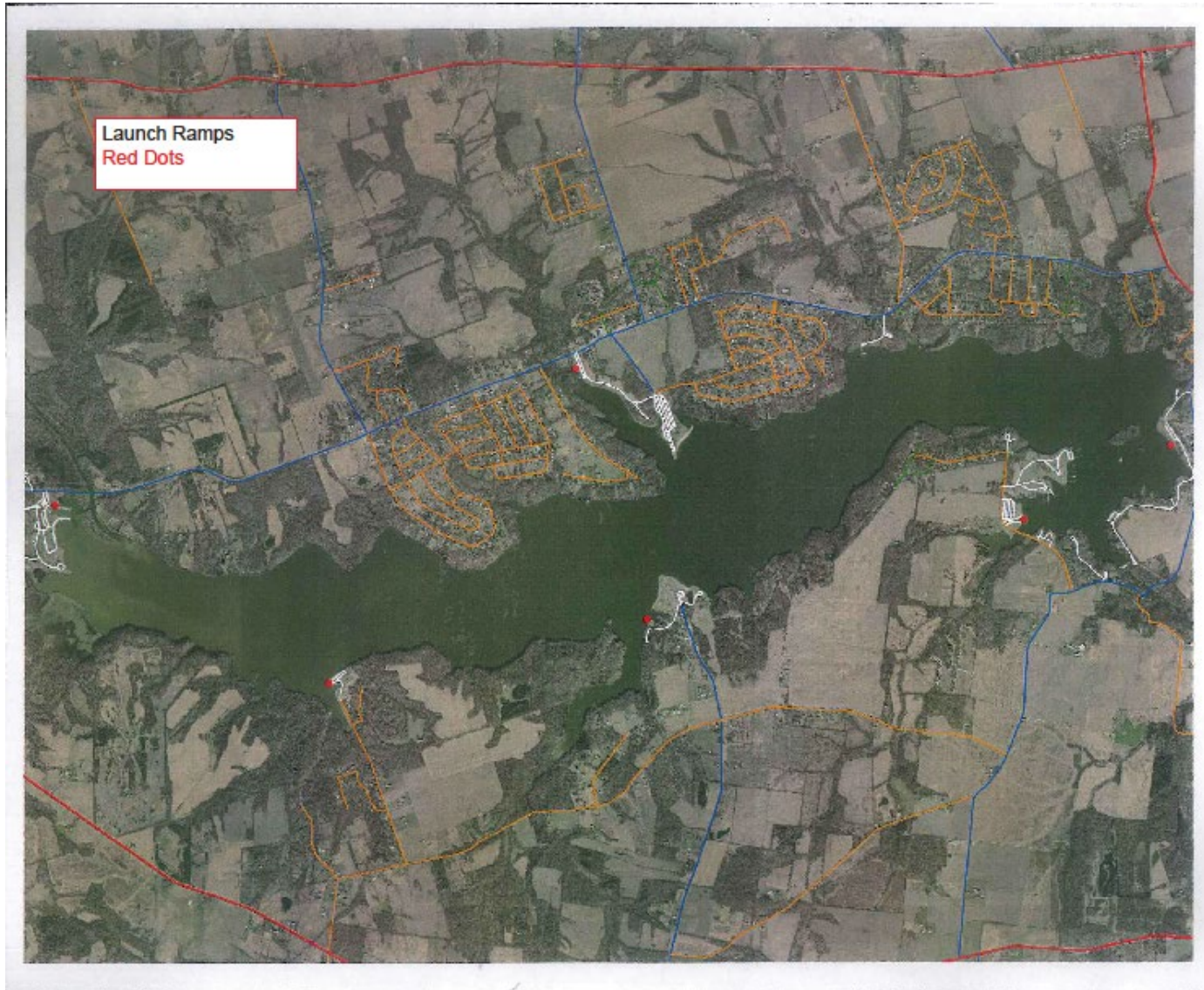
Rev. 10/12

Appendix B: Boundaries

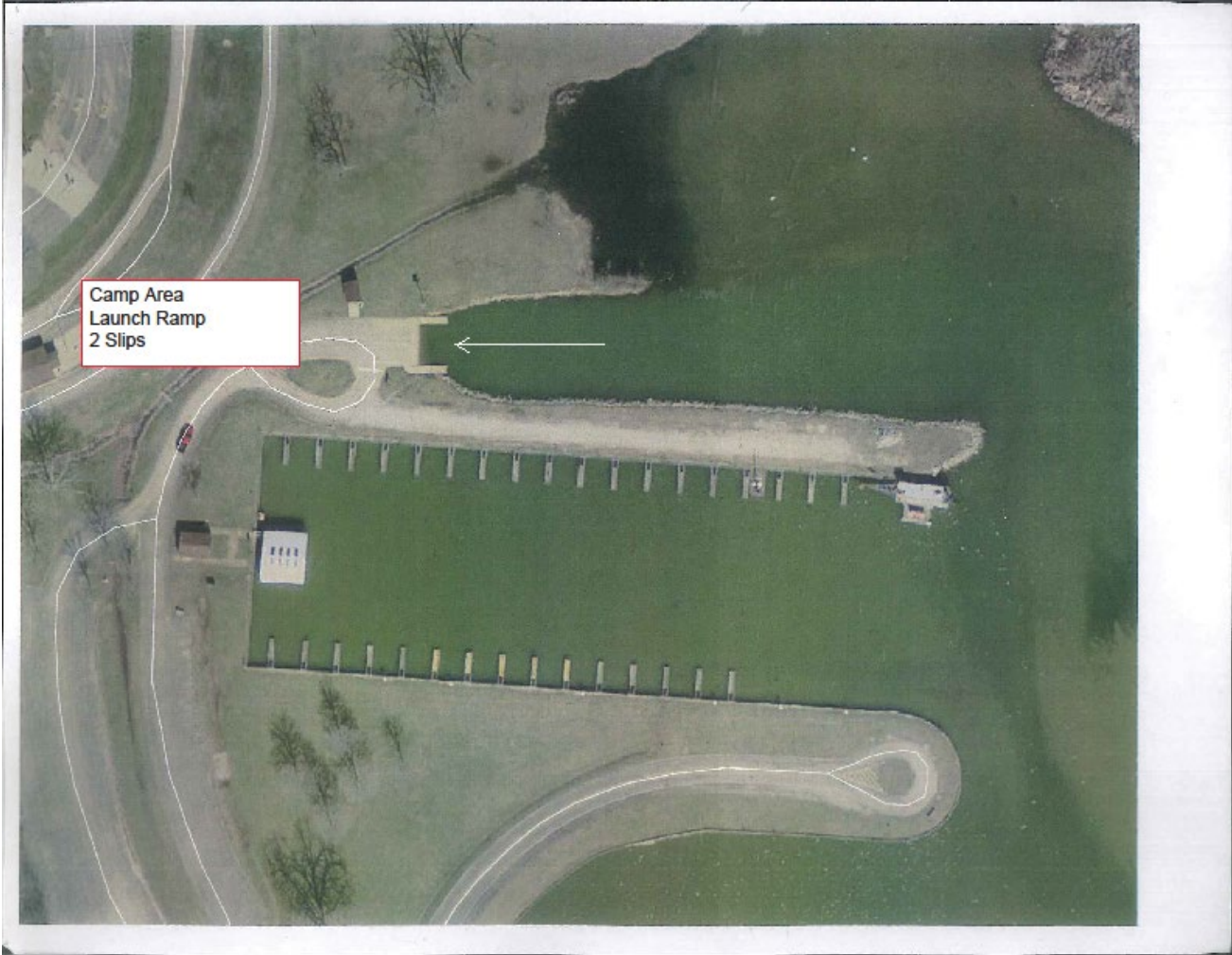


Appendix C: Marinas & Launch Ramps

Launch Ramps Parkwide



Camp Area Launch Ramp



North Beach Launch Ramp



East Shore Drive Launch Ramp



East Shore Marina Launch Ramp



South Beach Launch Ramp



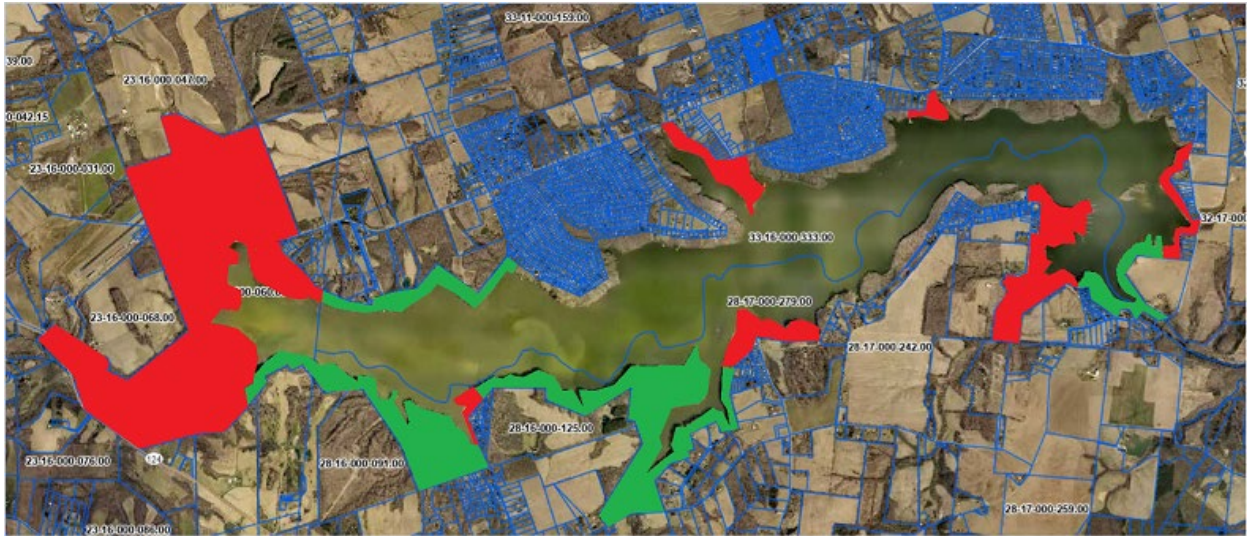
Fisherman's Wharf Launch Ramp



Appendix D: Buoy Locations



Appendix E: Protected Areas



Protected Shoreline Areas

- State owned property with high-trafficked public access and significant user potential - **RED**
- Specific areas of ecological protection and maintenance access that are not open to dock permits/construction include:
 - Between docks 10-35
 - Between dock 3200 and the Rocky Fork State Park Campground
 - Between docks 1350-2850

Appendix F: Beaches

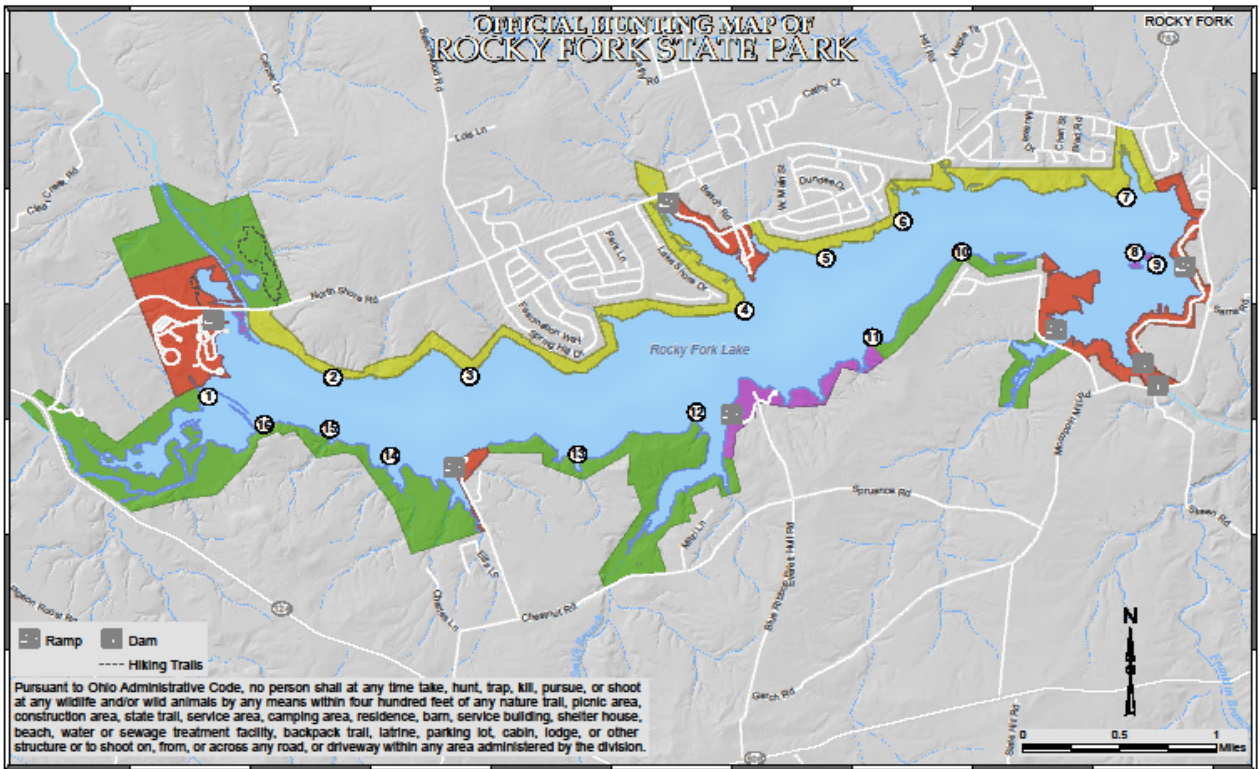
North Beach Swimming Area




South Beach Swimming Area



Appendix G: Hunting Map



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Registration Duck Blind Area Archery, Waterfowl Trapping Only Trapping and Waterfowl Only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to Hunting, Trapping During Season Open to Waterfowl Only* Closed to Hunting 	<p>OFFICIAL HUNTING MAP - for hunting and/or trapping of game birds, game mammals and fur-bearing animals (Further subject to Wildlife Orders then in effect.)</p> <p>APPROVED: _____ <small>Chief, Division of Game and Watercraft</small></p> <p>EFFECTIVE DATE: _____ DATE POSTED: _____</p> <p><small>THIS HUNTING MAP IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THE CURRENT OFFICIAL HUNTING MAP WILL BE POSTED AT THE PARK OFFICE AT LEAST 30 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF ANY CHANGES.</small></p>	<p>DISCLAIMER This product of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is intended to provide general information only and should not be used for any other purposes. It is not intended for resale or to replace site-specific investigations. These data were compiled by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, which reserves the publication rights to this material. If these data are used in the compilation of other data sets or maps for distribution or publication, this source must be referenced.</p> 
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*Except for areas that are closer than 400 feet from any structure, parking lot, or trail.

Appendix H: Rocky Fork State Park Private Dock Policy

ROCKY FORK STATE PARK PRIVATE DOCK POLICY



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PARKS AND WATERCRAFT
2045 MORSE ROAD, BUILDING C4
COLUMBUS, OH 43229



Glen Cobb, Chief, ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft

ROCKY FORK STATE PARK PRIVATE DOCK POLICY

(Effective March 1, 2024)

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1546.32, adjacent property owners, meaning those who share a property boundary with the State of Ohio at Rocky Fork State Park, may apply for a private Dock Permit from the Chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Parks and Watercraft (Division).

CURRENT STATE CLUSTER DOCK HOLDERS AND EXISTING NON-CONFORMING STRUCTURES

An adjacent property owner who is currently a licensed dock holder at a state owned and maintained cluster dock near their property, and who wants to continue to use that dockage in the future, must, between now and the 2024 dock season, submit a request to the Division to assume private ownership and all future responsibility for that dock. Upon the Division's granting of such a request, the Annual Dock Permit Fees shall be reduced to the fees required by ORC 1546.32.

Existing private docks that were permitted and licensed to adjacent property owners prior to October 3, 2023 may remain for the life of the structure with normal maintenance, but may not be replaced, modified, or substantially repaired (i.e. repaired to the extent that the repair alters the original construction of the structure) without first applying for and obtaining a Dock Permit as required by ORC 1546.32, the Rocky Fork State Park Shoreline Management Plan, and this Dock Policy.

ANNUAL DOCK PERMIT FEE

The Annual Dock Season runs from April 1 to October 31 of each year. All dock owners must pay their Annual Dock Permit Fees and any associated charges prior to April 1, or be subject to loss of their privilege to have a private dock.

The Annual Dock Permit Fee and associated charges for private docks shall be those set forth in ORC 1546.32 and the Rocky Fork State Park Shoreline Management Plan.

EXISTING DOCK ACQUISITIONS

If an adjacent property transfers ownership, the new property owner may submit the fee and application for a Dock Permit approving their acquisition of the existing dock from its prior owner and requiring the dock to be maintained in accordance with this Dock Policy. Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 1501:46-12-03, subleasing, transfer, assignment, or unauthorized use of a private dock without written permission of the Chief is strictly prohibited.

DOCK CONSTRUCTION

Any adjacent property owner who wants to construct a new private dock near their property, or at an existing cluster dock near their property, or who wants to replace, modify, or substantially repair their existing dock at Rocky Fork Lake, must first apply for and obtain a Dock Permit from the Chief that includes and complies with the following:

- Documentation confirming that the Applicant owns property adjacent to Rocky Fork State Park and identifying the location of that adjacent property in relation to the proposed dock construction site.
- Measurements demonstrating that the proposed dock construction site is of sufficient existing water depth. No dredging will be permitted to prep any site.
- Detailed drawings of the proposed dock and bulkhead following one of the four Pre-Approved Dock Designs set forth in this Dock Policy. Fixed canopies, buildings, or structures shall be strictly prohibited.
- A shoreline stabilization plan showing minimal shoreline construction. The dock's attachment to the shoreline should address bank erosion, but otherwise be limited to construction only as necessary for safe dock access.
- Dock construction standards based on Rocky Fork Lake's wave and weather factors, such as:
 - Heavy-duty galvanized, steel-frame floating structures with sufficiently thick, plastic coating, enclosing foam floatation, impervious to fuels, animals, and impacts.
 - Anchorage by slip pipe designed to sustain moving ice or to allow for removal of the dock for winter protection.
 - Ability of any floating dock intended to remain all year to adjust to lake level fluctuations of up to 5 feet above and 2 feet below normal pool level without damage to the dock's framework, anchorage, or flotation integrity.
- All lumber used in the construction of a Dock must be designed for minimum live load of 85 pounds per square foot (psf). If a floating dock is to be constructed, the live load can be reduced to 30 psf. The use of creosote or (Penta) treated lumber is prohibited.
- No oil drums will be permitted as floatation. Only factory-built cylinders with Styrofoam fill will be allowed.
- Dock construction materials that are new, unused, and comply with the Dock Construction Specifications set forth in this Dock Policy.

DOCK CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS

STEEL TRUSS FRAMES

- 1 ½" OR 2" by 3/16" steel frames
- ½" round bar truss webbing
- Hot-dip galvanizing required
- 12" frame height
- 4' to 6' in width on walkways
- 3' to 4' in width on fingers

FLOAT DRUMS

- Foam filled totally enclosed
- Square or rectangular design
- Min of .150 polyethylene shell

DECKING

- Pressure treated
- Cedar plank
- Composite wood alternative

ANCHORAGE SYSTEM

- Slip spud design
- 3" diameter spuds

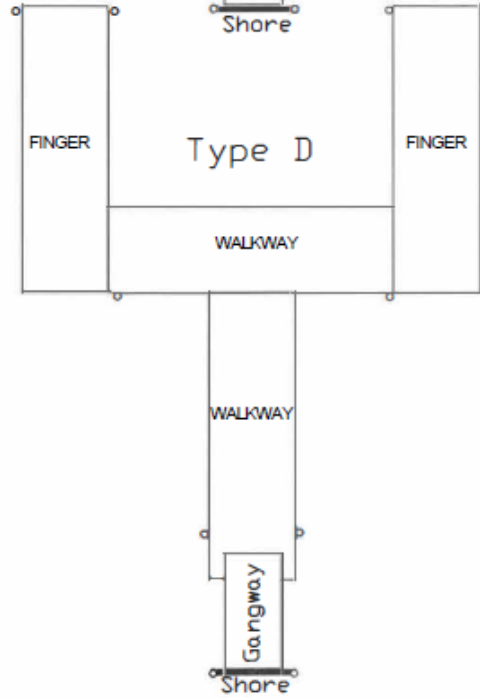
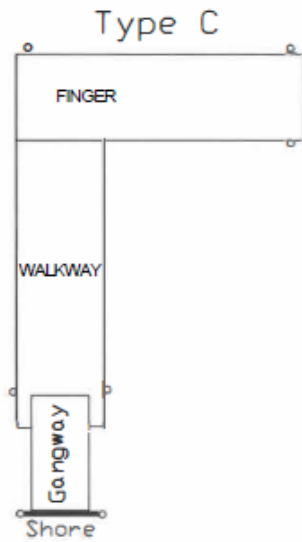
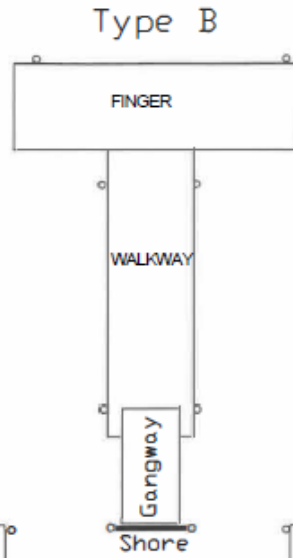
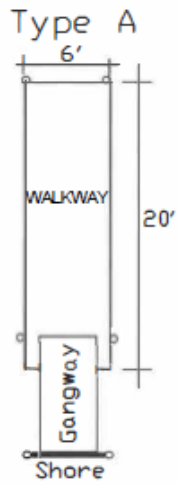
SHORE ACCESS

- Bridge or gangway attached to shore
- Must be easily unattached from dock if dock is to be winterized
- Must be attached to a bulkhead or other permanent structure with at least one hinge point

BULKHEAD

- Legs and top plate will be made of 4"x4" angle iron ¼" thick
- Legs will be secured in concrete that is minimally 4' deep and 16" wide
- Bulkhead design can be modified for sites with a rock base during the site evaluation

PRE-APPROVED DOCK DESIGNS



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Watercraft

Proposed Activity: Dock Plan

Location: Rocky Fork Park

Date: March 2022

Scale: 1" = 10'

